

April 22, 2002

State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, the Empire State is proud to be the place where countless citizens of the world have settled to become leaders in various areas of endeavor, mindful that the journey taken by many of these fine men and women did not always begin voluntarily or happily; many of New York and the Nation's Armenian citizens who arrived in the early part of the last century came here as a result of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23, a tragic event that nearly ended the lives of all Armenians; and

Whereas, the time between most Armenians' arrival up until their modern presence here has been notably fruitful for them and for the greater community of New York and America, but a sincere effort at acknowledging the circumstances of their bittersweet trek to our welcoming shores helps us understand and admire Armenians far better; a learned appreciation for their history will also teach people a sad lesson in man's inhumanity to his fellow man, and the lengths to which neglect by the world community can cause the already- tragic taking of one life to multiply into a tremendously costly, genuine exercise in genocide; and

Whereas, the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23 was an organized extermination campaign employed by the Ottoman Turkish authorities, under whose imperial authority most Armenians lived; agents of the Turkish Government who included military personnel and willing civilian volunteers utilized some of the cruelest methods ever used against people to wipe out Armenian men, women and children; those Armenians spared a quick and violent death by blade, bullet or beating were starved and dehydrated during exile marches that represent a different, unspeakable, type of journey for Armenians and also for Greeks and Assyrians, two other Christian minorities singled out by the Turks for their differences; and

Whereas, the final result of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23 was the near extermination of the Armenian people, the loss of the majority of their ancestral lands and the dispersing into many areas of the world the scarred survivors of this extreme crime against people; today Armenians throughout their diaspora struggle to support their homeland, a shadow of a once-proud nation that was the first state-in 301 A.D. – ever to adopt Christianity as its official religion; every endeavor to preserve the rich language, cultural and religious traditions of Armenia must now be viewed as a step toward compensating for the damage done by the Genocide; few cultures save the Jews, who endured the Holocaust years after the Armenian Genocide, must carry such a burden; and

Whereas, denial of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23 is an abomination that occupies no proper place in debates carried out by New Yorkers, who represent some of the most intellectual by also the most morally certain people anywhere; as the movement toward full recognition of the Genocide follows its steady pace, every human being wanting to be counted as an Armenian Genocide recognition supporter can be considered a citizen of New York or an honorary citizen of New York; that is, they will be a friendly neighbor among a growing but still cherished community of people who treasure the truth;

Now, Therefore, I, George E. Pataki, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim April 24, 2002 as

ARMENIAN REMEMBRANCE DAY

in the Empire State.

Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this twenty-second day of April in the year two thousand and two.

(Signed)
George E. Pataki
Governor